

# Muscatine Youth Baseball Child Protection Plan

Adopted in 2022

## FEDERAL LAW PROTECTING YOUTH INVOLVED IN OUR PROGRAMS

In 2018, the “Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017,” also known as the SafeSport Act, became Federal Law. This national law increases the standard of care and makes it a crime for an individual involved in a national governing body sports organization, including Little League, to ignore, or not report to law enforcement, any reasonable suspicion of an act of child abuse, including sexual abuse, within 24 hours.

Muscatine Youth Baseball must adhere to the following requirements:

- Conduct annual background checks on volunteers and hired workers. Prohibit anyone with any offenses that would disqualify them as a participant in any Little League activity.
- Report Child Abuse, including sexual abuse involving a minor, to the proper authorities within 24 hours.
- Adopt a policy that prohibits retaliation against “good faith” reports of child abuse.
- Adopt a policy that limits one-on-one contact with minors without being in an observable and interruptible distance from another adult.

Abuse or Neglect: The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 U.S.C.A §5106g), as amended by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010, defines child abuse and neglect as, at a minimum, “any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation;” or “an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.”

## Different types of Child Abuse or Neglect

- Neglect is the negligent failure of a minor’s caretaker to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision which threatens harm to a minor’s health, safety, or welfare.
- Physical Abuse is any non-accidental, intentional, deliberate act that results in physical injury.
- Emotional and Psychological Abuse is any act that diminishes the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth by humiliation, intimidation, verbal assault, and emotional deprivation.
- Sexual Abuse is any type of maltreatment, violation, or exploitation that refers to the involvement of the child in sexual activity to provide sexual gratification or financial benefit to the perpetrator.
- Bullying is the intentional, repetitive harmful act, words, and behavior that makes the victim feel hurt, scared, and/or ashamed. Bullying can also be an imbalance of real or perceived power between

the bully and the victim. Different types of bullying include, but are not limited to, physical bullying, verbal bullying, emotional bullying, harassment, and hazing.

- Grooming is the process where an individual creates a relationship with a minor or the minor's family to gain trust so he or she can take advantage of a minor for a sexual purpose.

*Child/Minor: Any individual who is younger than age 18 or who is not an emancipated minor.*

Muscatine Youth Baseball: Any games, practices, tournaments, approved activities, and approved special games are considered MYB programs and activities.

MYB Volunteer or Hired Worker: Refers to any person in the organization who provides regular service to the league and has contact with minors: coaches, managers, the Board of Directors, program workers, coaches, maintenance workers, or anyone that has repetitive access to or contact with players or teams.

## **VOLUNTEER APPLICATION PROCESS**

With the above definitions, we have a better understanding of child abuse, which will prevent potential child abusers from entering the ranks of Muscatine Youth Baseball. Another aspect of prevention is screening all applicants who wish to be a manager, coach, member of the Board of Directors, and any other person, volunteer, and/or hired worker who provides regular services to the league and/or have repetitive access to or contact with players or teams.

Background Check — An annual background check is required to be conducted on every individual before the applicant assumes any of his/her duties for the current season. The background check must, at a minimum, meet the standard of a nationwide criminal search, a national sex offender registry search.

Exclusion of Certain Individuals — Muscatine Youth Baseball shall not permit any person to participate in any manner whose background check reveals a conviction for, guilty plea, no contest plea, or admission to any crime involving or against a minor. Muscatine Youth Baseball may prohibit any individual from participating as a volunteer or hired worker if the league deems the individual unfit or inappropriate to work or volunteer.

Every individual is required to complete a volunteer application every year before the applicant assumes any of his/her duties for the current season. The individual is required to consent to a background check during the volunteer application process. The local league Board of Directors must conduct, review, and verify that the background check process is completed.

NOTE: Some states have enacted laws that require additional background check requirements that are different from or supplement those mandated by Muscatine Youth Baseball. The state of Iowa is not one of those states.

The league's Board of Directors must review the results of the background check with the Little League Official Volunteer Application and a government-issued photo identification card to verify that the information provided on both is identical (full name, DOB, and address). The league should confirm that

the full legal name is correct (for example, John J Smith JR. not Johnny Smith). Some states and local counties only provide full legal name and DOB as identifiers for the National Criminal Database.

### **Offenses that Prohibit Participation**

Ensuring the safety of players is the most important job of a Muscatine Youth Baseball volunteer. Unfortunately, the reality is that there are individuals in this world who intentionally cause harm to minors. Prohibiting those individuals from participating is every Muscatine Youth Baseball participant's responsibility. The following offenses prohibit an individual from participating:

- Any charge, conviction, no contest plea or guilty plea, or admission to any crime involving or against a minor.
- If an individual has any charge, conviction, no contest plea or guilty plea, or admission to any crimes that are considered sexual in nature or listed on the National Sex Offender Registry, they must be carefully reviewed before appointing the individual as a volunteer to participate in any capacity in the league.
- NOTE: If an individual involved with a league, or any activity of the Muscatine Youth Baseball program, is under investigation for any type of child abuse, or has a pending charge against, or involving, a minor, they must be suspended until the outcome of the investigation or pending charges are complete and the allegations are resolved.

If Muscatine Youth Baseball becomes aware of information, by any means whatsoever, that an individual, including, but not limited to, volunteers, players, and hired workers, has been convicted of, pled guilty, pled no contest, or admitted to any crime involving or against a minor, Muscatine Youth Baseball will immediately contact the applicable governmental agency to confirm the accuracy of the information before allowing the volunteer to participate in their position while suspending the volunteer until the information is received and reviewed.

### **PROPERLY HANDLING SENSITIVE DOCUMENTS**

It is necessary to require the volunteers and/or hired workers to complete a volunteer application and consent to a background check, but Muscatine Youth Baseball also has due diligence to protect the information that is provided. To protect the privacy of volunteers and others, the following best practices have been established:

- Muscatine Youth Baseball President shall only share, on a need-to-know basis, any personal, non-public record or information contained in the volunteer application or attached documents, with other MYB Officers to make personnel decisions.
  - o Current Muscatine Youth Baseball President must maintain the record of a volunteer in a locked, secured location for at least two (2) years after the volunteer is no longer in the league. When it comes time to dispose of these records, they must be shredded or confidentially destroyed, as they contain sensitive personal information. All actions concerning these records must comply with any applicable laws.

o If Muscatine Youth Baseball has records utilized for reviewing a potential volunteer's background check, they must maintain these records the same length of time that the league maintains the volunteer's application. The records must be maintained in a locked and secured area, such as the League President's home, and not in a clubhouse or similar public facility. The record must also be properly shredded or confidentially destroyed when it is time to dispose of the records.

## **MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE**

When an allegation of abuse is made against a Muscatine Youth Baseball volunteer, the organization must protect the child from any further potential abuse by keeping the alleged abuser away from all children in the program until after the incident is reported to one or more of the below outlets and completely investigated.

### **Investigating Suspected Abuse**

Once a report of abuse has been made, the league should promptly notify the alleged abuser that they are suspended until the investigation is completed. Muscatine Youth Baseball will work with a lawyer who can advise them about the rights of an alleged abuser. If the investigation substantiates the allegations, MYB must assure that the individual will not have any further contact with the children in the MYB organization.

All information and statements received from the parties involved with the incident (suspect, victim, witness, etc.) must be passed onto the proper authorities as explained below. Muscatine Youth Baseball officials will not attempt to investigate suspected abuse. Let law enforcement and child services professionals conduct the investigation.

### **Reporting**

Child abuse laws vary from state to state, but federal law establishes a nationwide standard of duty to report suspected child abuse. Any individual who participates in MYB must report suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, within 24 hours to the proper authorities. If a case of abuse is suspected within MYB, it must be reported to the appropriate child services organizations and/or local law enforcement, as well as Muscatine Youth Baseball President. REMEMBER: If you or someone else is in immediate and serious danger, you should call 911.

After making a report to law enforcement, individuals may also consider contacting one of the following organizations for additional support:

- U.S. Center for SafeSport : <https://safesport.org/>
- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's: <https://connect.missingkids.org/>
- The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline:

<https://childhelpline.org/>

Call or text: 1-800-422-4453

- Please note that these organizations are not affiliated with Muscatine Youth Baseball.

### **Suspending/Terminating**

If there are any allegations against an individual in the league, Muscatine Youth Baseball will take the next step and assure that the individual will not have any further contact with the children in the MYB league.

### **Suspending**

- If there are any type of allegations against an individual, MYB will promptly notify the alleged abuser that they are suspended until the end of an external investigation.

### **Terminating**

- If the allegations are substantiated, MYB will notify the alleged abuser that they are terminated from their position as well as banning the individual in question from participating in future seasons with Muscatine Youth Baseball.

### **Communication from the League**

Muscatine Youth Baseball's Board of Directors must be prepared to contact parents if a substantiated abuse allegation is made against a volunteer or participant within the MYB organization. MYB must remember that both parties (suspect and victim) have privacy rights. MYB must only provide a public record, without any commentary, about an arrest that involves claims of child abuse. Do not violate the privacy rights of individuals in your state, however, MYB parents do have a right to public records. Public records are documents received from a governmental body/agency that are available to the general public (i.e. police or sheriffs records, court records, a statement from the arresting police department). If a league is contacted by the media, assistance is available by contacting the MYB lawyer on retainer.

### **NON-RETALIATION FOR REPORTING**

Concern has been expressed over the potential for criminal or civil liability if a report of abuse is subsequently found to be unsubstantiated. However, potential reporters should not be afraid to come forward in cases where they either have firsthand knowledge of or a good faith belief that abuse has occurred, even if there is a possibility that the report is wrong. Many states provide immunity to those who report suspected child abuse in "good faith." Little League policy prohibits retaliation, of any kind, when a good faith report of child abuse is made.

### **APPROPRIATE ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION GUIDELINES**

An adult participant should not allow themselves to be alone with a minor (who is not their child) and should always position themselves in an area where they can be observed by others. Minors must always be supervised by appointed volunteers and/or hired workers who have completed the mandated background check. If an adult participant finds himself or herself alone with a child, he or she should

remedy the situation by removing themselves to an area within an observable and/or interruptible distance of another adult over the age of 18.

#### Practices or games

- **Encourage the Buddy System:** There is safety in numbers. Encourage players to move about in groups of two or more children of similar age, whether an approved adult is present or not. This includes travel, leaving the field, or using the restroom areas. It's far more difficult to victimize a child if they're not alone. If an approved adult must accompany a minor to another location, a minor of the same age or another approved adult should accompany them. All interactions between minors and adults should be observable and within an interruptible distance of another adult.
- **Toilet facilities:** A large portion of MYB participants can use toilet facilities on their own, so there should be no need for an adult to accompany a child into restroom areas. However, there can sometimes be special circumstances under which a child requires assistance to use the toilet facilities. For example, within coach pitch league there may be a need for adult assistance, but there should still be adequate privacy for that child and there must be another approved adult who is within an observable and/or interruptible distance from you and the child you are assisting. (This is only for MYB volunteers not for the child's parents/guardians). Again, the "buddy system" should be utilized in instances like this.
- **Proper Supervision:** Minors must always be within the visual contact of an approved volunteer and/or hired workers when outside to verify that they are not approached by a stranger or an individual who is not permitted near the minors. Also, this helps to verify that the minors are participating in safe activities. If you cannot see a player, then they are not being properly supervised. Adults should still respect the minor's privacy in toilet facilities as outlined above.

#### Transportation:

- **Car Safety:** When traveling in a vehicle with minors, adults must have at least two minors in the vehicle at all times.
- **Rides:** Children dropped off too early or picked up late are potential targets. Little League parents and volunteers should be encouraged to pick up and drop off on time. Little League encourages talking to the youth participating in our program about safety issues. Children should be warned about the risk of strangers and how to avoid accepting rides from anyone that was not pre-arranged by their parent/legal guardian. Children should also be told to always tell someone if they're approached by a stranger for any reason, even if it seems innocent, like to help the stranger find a pet. If a player is left unattended after a practice/game by their parent or guardian, the coach or manager must ask another approved adult to stay behind to wait for the parent/guardian.

#### Physical Contact

- **Physical contact between volunteers and/or hired workers with minors should be very limited.**

## PROHIBITED ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION GUIDELINES

To minimize the chance of an individual's opportunity to groom a minor, the following practices relating to one-on-one interactions between a minor athlete and an approved adult volunteer or hired worker should be followed:

- A minor athlete will not be left unattended or unsupervised at any time. The minor athlete should always be within the sight of an approved adult volunteer.
- Volunteers or hired workers are prohibited from being alone with minor athletes unless:

### **There is an emergency.**

There is written permission from the minor athlete's parent/legal guardian. The written permission must be kept on the volunteer or hired worker.

The volunteer or hired worker is the minor athlete's parent/legal guardian, sibling, or personal care assistant.

- Volunteers or hired workers should not interact one-on-one with unrelated minor athletes in settings outside the regular scope of the official Muscatine Youth Baseball program (e.g. the volunteer's home, a restaurant, a vehicle, personal communication including electronic communication).

NOTE: If a volunteer is in a position where he/she is left alone with a player, they should not leave the child so long as the volunteer has exhausted all the options above to comply with the guidelines of the policy. Likewise, if a child is injured and must be transported to a hospital, urgent care, or treatment center, the volunteer should not leave the child alone if all options have been exhausted to comply with the policy in an emergency where medical treatment is necessary

## **BULLYING AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS**

Muscatine Youth Baseball is focused on the total well-being of our players. Any type of bullying can have serious effects on players. Anyone who engages in harassment, in any form (verbal, physical, cyber, etc.), or commits violence or acts of intimidation shall be prohibited from participating in Muscatine Youth Baseball. This applies to player-to-player, adult-to-player, player-to-adult, and adult-to-adult interactions. We strive to have a safe and encouraging environment at all Muscatine Youth Baseball functions.

The following types of behavior will not be accepted in the Muscatine Youth Baseball Program:

- **Physical Bullying:** Hitting, pushing, shoving, punching, strangling, hair-pulling, stealing, excessive tickling, or any other deliberate and inappropriate touching.
- **Verbal Bullying:** Hurtful, deliberate name-calling, banter, taunting, intimidating, threatening, gossiping, and teasing.
- **Emotional Bullying:** Rejection, terrorizing, extorting, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics, such as race, disability, ethnicity, or perceived sexual orientation, manipulating friendships, isolating, and peer pressure.
- **Social/Cyber Bullying:** Deliberately excluding, alienating, ignoring, spreading rumors, impersonation, inappropriate photographs, video shaming, and hacking social media accounts.
- **Harassment:** Harassment includes bullying and all of the actions listed above, as well as subjecting someone to unwanted sexual advances, involving physical contact or explicit written or verbal language.
- **Hazing:** An initiation, ritual process involving different types of harassments that intentionally humiliates the individual or a group.

### *APPLICABILITY*

The Muscatine Youth Baseball Child Protection Policy and the elements of the broader program apply to anyone who has any involvement in the MYB program, as well as anyone who participates in Muscatine Youth Baseball-approved programs and activities, including, but not limited to, Boards of Directors, volunteers, managers, coaches, umpires, spectators, players, and hired workers who provide regular services to the league and/or have repetitive access to or contact with players or teams. Anyone with questions on who the Child Protection Policy applies to should contact a MYB board member.



## *ENFORCEMENT*

Muscatine Youth Baseball shall not establish a culture that does not allow any type of activity that promotes or allows any form of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct behavior between players, coaches, parents, volunteers, hired workers, and any other individual. League officials must remove any individual that is exhibiting any type of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct and report the individual to the authorities immediately.